

YE OLDE
PORT WINE HOUSE
of
Dirty Dick
(D.D.)

ESTABLISHED
1745

●
A LEGEND OF BISHOPSGATE FROM
"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"
CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS

●
D.D.'s WORLD FAMOUS CELLARS & VAULTS
202-204, BISHOPSGATE, LONDON, E.C.2

DIRTY DICK'S CELLARS

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*Wines and Spirits
at controlled prices
forwarded to all
parts of the country*

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SUBJECT TO STOCKS BEING AVAILABLE
ORDERS GIVEN IMMEDIATE ATTENTION

ESTABLISHED 1745



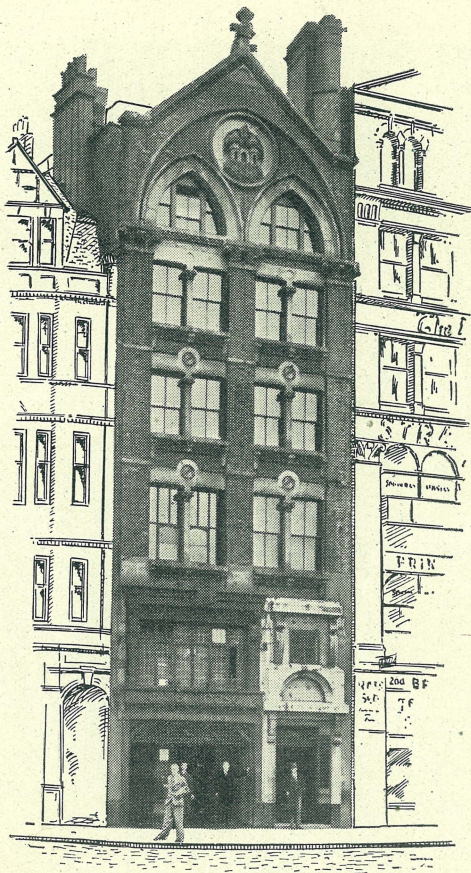
*Recovered from his loss behold !
Dick selling spirits fine and old,
His wines too, are the market's pick
Keep on so doing, " Good old Dick."*

"Words worth" knowing.

A legend of Bishopsgate without

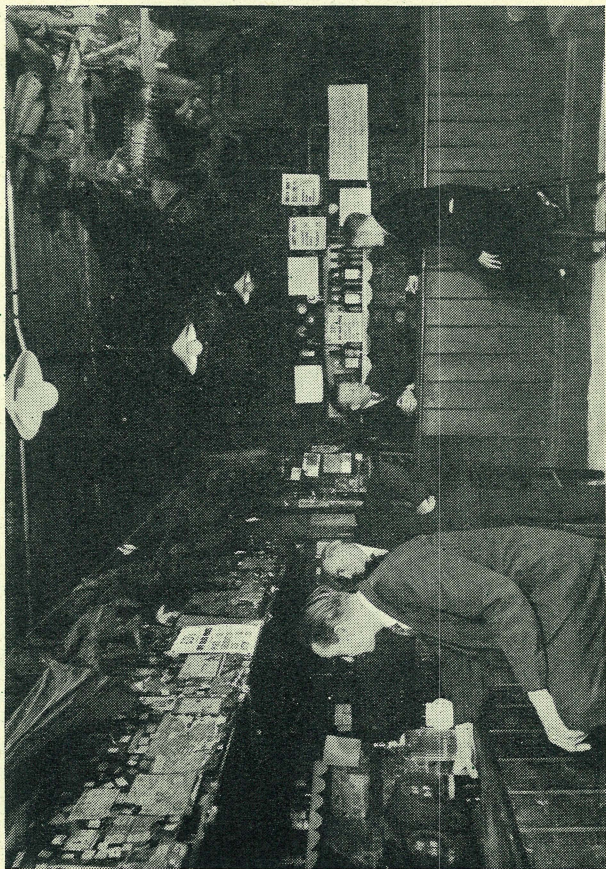
Shakespeare has said that some men are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them. It would be rather difficult to say to which of these three categories BENTLEY belonged. It does not appear that he was born great, for he was simply a prosperous tradesman, inheriting a good business from his father ; that he, to some extent, achieved greatness is true, but it was by an extraordinary method as will presently be shown ; that he had greatness or notoriety thrust upon him by people who made his peculiarities and his Dirty Stores the talk of the town, is beyond doubt.

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DIRTY DICK'S, 202 & 204, Bishopsgate, London, E.C.2

even the most opulent people who were engaged in business, resided on their public premises. YOUNG BENTLEY had a good education for those times, but the treatment which he received from his father did not accord with his notions of what was quite right and proper, so he left home to seek his fortune elsewhere, and remained away for several years, during which the business thrived. His father, amongst other curious acts, presented a bell to the City Church, to be rung on every occasion of the anniversary of his birthday till his death, which occurred about the year 1761 A.D., when he left the whole of the property to the son, who became quite a dandy, always appearing in public in the most fashionable attire, and with his hair arranged by a court perruquier—all which made his subsequent untidy and neglected habits appear the more conspicuous. How soon it was after he succeeded to the business that he became addicted to the habits that gained for him the nickname of "DIRTY DICK," is not well known, but it is certain that, whilst for a considerable period he made his appearance in public splendidly attired, he at home grew negligent, often attending in the business unshaven and with his shirt sleeves tucked up; and it is known that, when once a friend remonstrated with him upon his want of personal cleanliness, he answered: "It's of no use; if I wash my hands to-day, they will be dirty again to-morrow." He was very parsimonious; mended his own clothes, and people said he was his own launderer. His desire was to limit his expenses to eighteenpence a day, and with this view he would purchase only the commonest and cheapest eatables which he cooked for



SMALL BAR IN THE VAULTS

himself. When told that other people could not live as he did, he would say : " Anybody can that pleases. It is no hardship to me, though I used to have seven dishes at dinner and three servants to wait upon me."

The event which brought about this extraordinary change in manners and habits was of a romantic character, similar to that which has entirely changed the disposition of many a better man than he was—it was, in short, a " love affair." He was engaged to be married to a young lady to whom he was greatly attached ; and he invited his intended bride, together with a number of friends, to a splendid entertainment. On the day appointed, however, he received news of the young lady's sudden death, which so distressed him that he ordered the dining room to be shut up, and resolved that it should never be opened again during his lifetime ; and the feast provided was left to be eaten by the rats, mice and spiders, or to go to decay, as the case might be.

" DIRTY DICK," as he was now generally known, lived a solitary life, suffering no servant to come near him. He would not have even a cat or a dog as a companion, because, he said, they destroyed one's property. As to rats or mice, when the feast which he had provided was all eaten or had decayed, he used to remark that they would not live with him, because he provided nothing for them to exist upon. He paid a man to watch his door, to prevent impertinent intrusion, take out goods and hand him the shutters of his shop, which he put up and took down with his own hands, thinking



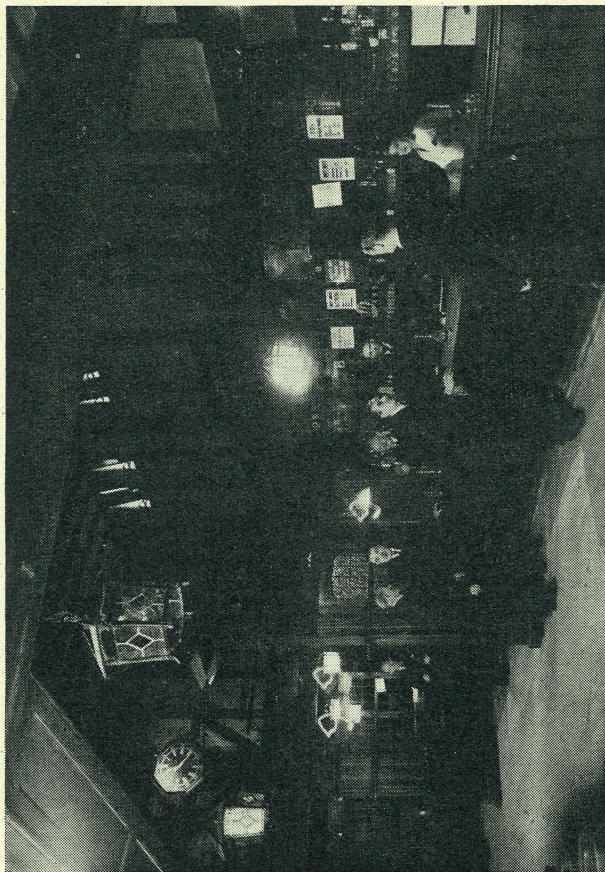
MAIN BAR IN THE VAULTS



WINE VAULT

cities, he was remarkably polite to Ladies who, with the curiosity which is characteristic of all Eve's daughters, would often go to his shop, and were invariably pleased with the politeness of his manners.

For nearly fifty years he refused to admit anyone to the upper portion of the premises, and when, at his death, an entrance was effected, the house was found to be in a ruinous condition—the cooking and other utensils were old, dirty and dilapidated, and cobwebs, dirt and dust had accumulated in every corner. In the chief room of the house, the door of which was strongly

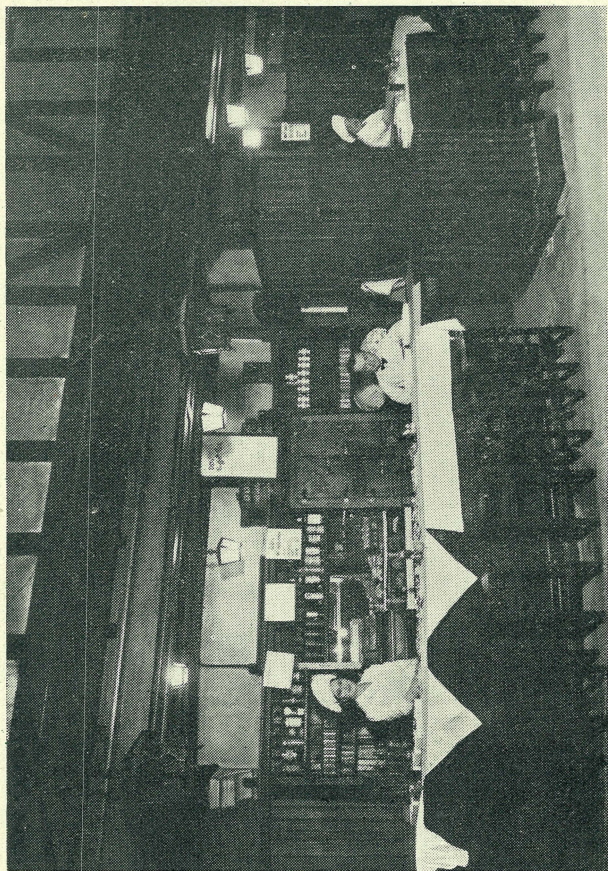


COUNTERS BAR

secured, the glasses and pictures were scarcely recognisable for the dust which had grown thick upon them ; the polished steel grate was loaded with rust ; the marble sideboard was all sorts of colours, from the stains which successive years had forced upon it. The worm-eaten table with the plate, cutlery and dishes, as well as the gilt chains and lustres, even in the general ruin that prevailed, showed that the furniture had once been of costly and elegant character.

“ DIRTY DICK,” for some years before his death, led a wandering life ; closing up the old shop, which he visited every year in the month of April, the supposed anniversary of his romantic attachments. He would then resume business for some weeks. His death occurred in 1809, at Musselburgh in Scotland. He left a large sum of money—the accumulations of his miserly habits. His will was a marvel of codicils and injunctions concerning the management of his property.

The old wine and spirit vaults are still in existence, but the venerable cobwebs with which the place was festooned, were of necessity somewhat rudely displaced during the rebuilding of the front and upper portion of the premises in the year 1870 when they were condemned and partially pulled down as dangerous by order of the City authorities. The ceiling and walls of the shop, together with many of the well-known accessories and relics, are still preserved, together with the set of rules by which the business has so long been governed, viz. :—



SNACK BAR

No person to be served if in the least intoxicated.

No error admitted or money exchanged after leaving the counter.

No improper language permitted.

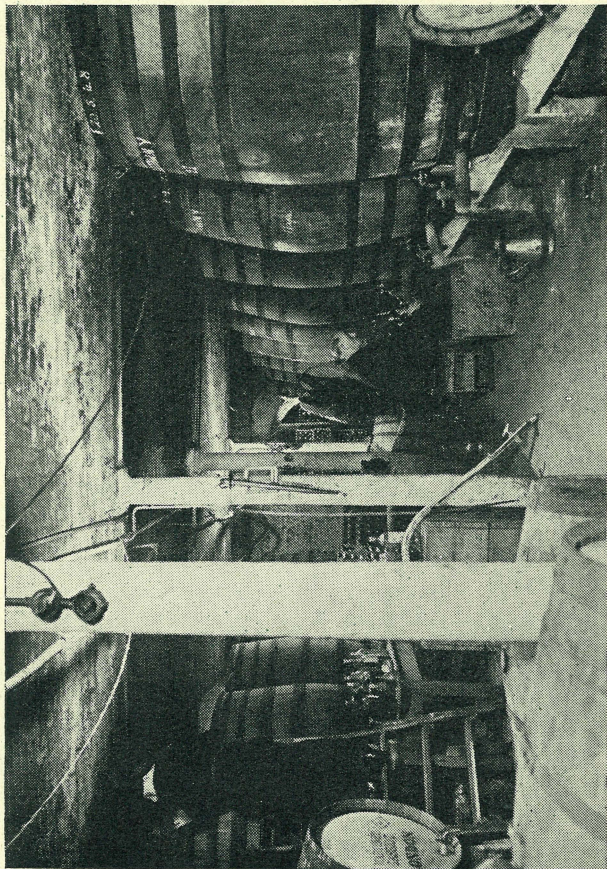
To this is added a note regarding the quality of the goods sold, and then comes the following :—

**The shop being small, difficulty occasionally arises in supplying customers, who will greatly oblige by bearing in mind the good old maxim :—
“When you are in a place of business transact your business and go about your business.”**

The story of “DIRTY DICK’S” life, etc., has been celebrated in the once popular song, “The King of the Cannibal Islands” :—

**“His palace was like Dirty Dick’s—
’Twas built of mud for want of bricks!”**

but it was told more fully some years ago in the following verses in “Household Words,” when that still popular journal was under the direction of the late Charles Dickens.



BOTTLING FROM THE WOOD

The Dirty Old Man

(DIRTY DICK)

A Legend of Bishopsgate

From "HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

Conducted by Charles Dickens



IN a dirty old house lived a Dirty Old Man,
Soap, towels or brushes were not in his plan ;
For forty long years as the neighbours declared,
His house never once had been cleaned or repaired.

'Twas a scandal and shame to the business-like street,
One terrible blot in a ledger so neat ;
The old shop with its glasses, black bottles and vats,
And the rest of the mansion a run for the rats.

Outside, the old plaster, all splatter and stain,
Looked spotty in sunshine, and streaky in rain ;
The window-sills sprouted with mildewy grass,
And the panes being broken, were known to be glass.

On a rickety signboard no learning could spell,
The merchant who sold, or the goods he'd to sell ;
But for house and for man, a new title took growth,
Like a fungus the dirt gave a name to them both.

Within these there were carpets and cushions of dust,
The wood was half rot, and the metal half rust ;
Old curtains—half cobwebs—hung grimly aloof ;
"Twas a spider's elysium from cellar to roof.

There, king of the spiders, the Dirty old man,
Lives busy, and dirty, as ever he can ;
With dirt on his fingers and dirt on his face,
The dirty old man thinks the dirt no disgrace.

From his wig to his shoes, from his coat to his shirt,
His clothes are a proverb—a marvel of dirt ;
The dirt is pervading, unfading, exceeding.
Yet the Dirty Old Man has learning and breeding.

Fine folks from their carriages, noble and fair,
Have entered his shop, less to buy than to stare,
And afterwards said, though the dirt was so frightful,
The Dirty Man's manners were truly delightful.

But they pried not upstairs thro' the dirt and the bloom,
Nor peeped at the door of the wonderful room
That gossips made much of in accents subdued,
But whose inside no one might brag to have viewed.

That room forty years since, folks settled and decked it,
The luncheon's prepared, and the guests are expected,
The handsome young host he is gallant and gay,
For his love and her friends are expected to-day,

With solid and dainty the table is dressed—
The wine beams its brightest—flowers bloom their best ;
Yet the host will not smile, and no guests will appear,
For his sweetheart is dead, as he shortly shall hear.

Full forty years since turned the key in that door,
'Tis a room deaf and dumb 'mid the city's uproar ;
The guests for whose joyance that table was spread,
May now enter as ghosts, for they're every one dead.

Through a chink in the shutter dim lights come and go,
The seats are in order, the dishes a row ;
But the luncheon was wealth to the rat and the mouse,
Whose descendants have long left the dirty old house.

Cup and platter are masked in thick layers of dust,
The flowers fallen to powder, the wine swath'd in crust ;
A nosegay was laid before one special chair,
And the faded blue ribbon that bound it is there.

The old man has played out his part in the scene,
Wherever he now is let's hope he's more clean ;
Yet give we a thought, free of scoffing or ban,
To that dirty old House and that Dirty old Man.

From "Household Words," conducted by Charles Dickens.

DIRTY DICK'S
IS RECOGNISED
AS ONE OF THE
SIGHTS OF LONDON



Famed for
DOURO PORTS
throughout the world

THE

CHURCH

OF

THE

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